

Hafa Adai!

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Hyatt to cease operations in June

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Hyatt Regency Saipan will permanently cease operations by the end of June after 43 years in operation.

Hyatt Regency Saipan, one of the CNMI's oldest establishments (officially opening back in the 1970s), will officially cease operations on June 30, 2024.

The shocking news was made public on Hyatt Regency's website yesterday.

Due to this change, Hyatt Regency Saipan's booking channels have stopped accepting reservations yesterday.

"Please be advised that Hyatt Regency Saipan will cease its operation permanently and will no longer be a Hyatt

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HYATT

Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

HK Airlines discusses add'l flights to Saipan



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The Commonwealth Ports Authority welcomes Hong Kong Airlines' inaugural flight back to Saipan with a water salute yesterday morning.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The monumental return of Hong Kong Airlines yesterday morning was a huge success with the company's chairman himself stating that discussions are already being had about adding ad-

ditional flights.

Early yesterday morning, Hong Kong Airlines' inaugural flight back to Saipan after a five-year hiatus touched down at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport bringing in 292 passengers from Hong Kong.

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Palacios: We're finally moving the needle

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang led the groundbreaking yes-

terday of another phase for the construction of the all-weather roadway along Route 36, also known as Windward/Chalan Kalabera Road, in Marpi.

Phase 1-A of Route 36 or

Windward/Kalabera Road Improvement involves the construction of approximately 0.76 miles of roadway that begins at the intersection of Route 36 (Windward Road)

and Route 318 (Chalan Matuis) and ends near the Kalabera Cave.

According to the Department of Public Works, the

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FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang lead the groundbreaking of Phase 1-A Route 36 Windward/Kalabera Road Improvement Project in Marpi yesterday.

IPI director says it's frustrating to get blame for missing liquor

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC director/general manager Howyo Chi said it is frustrating that they get the blame for the missing bottles of liquor at the IPI's resort/casino facility when they don't have the key for the vault where the bot-



Chi

tles of liquors were stored.

In response to Commonwealth Casino Commission board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero's question during the board's monthly meeting last Thursday, Chi said the casino/resort building still has 24-hour security as they provide two to three security guards at all times.

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INSIDE

BUSINESS

Adult U.S. TikTok users spend an average of 54 minutes on the app on any given day, more than Instagram, Snapchat or YouTube, according to research firm eMarketer.

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WORLD

Born and raised in Pakistan to parents who fled neighboring Afghanistan half a century ago, an 18-year-old found himself at the mercy of police in Karachi who took his cash, phone and motorbike, and sent him to a deportation center.

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LIFE & STYLE

The sexy tennis drama "Challengers" won the box office this weekend with \$15 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

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Local

Renovated park at Kagman Community Center unveiled

By CHRYSTAL MARINO

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CORRESPONDENT

Showing their commitment to the community and bringing smiles to countless children's faces, the Division of Youth Services-Child Protective Services, Rotary Club of Saipan, Northern Marianas Housing Corp., and Saipan and the Northern Islands Municipal Council officially opened the renovated Kagman Community Center park in Kagman II last Friday.

The facelift to the park included a revamped basketball court, sidewalk, solar lights, and a full and brand-new children's playground filled with swings and colorful and fun structures for children of all ages. Two of the structures, unlike any other park on island, are shaped like an adventurer's ship and a Caterpillar loader with slides coming out of each.

DYS director Vivian Sablan said she was grateful for the partnerships while working on the \$200,000 project.

Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* that they couldn't have done



Community partners and children cut the ribbon officially opening the new playground at the Kagman Community Center in Kagman II last Friday.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

it on their own and the effort was truly a showcase of partnership between agencies.

She is also happy to see that it's already bringing smiles to the children of Kagman II and hopes to see more community involvement and family engagement because of it.

Speaking on behalf of the Rotary, sergeant-at-arms Curtis Dancoe shared, "We do community service projects, and we're really happy and fortunate to work with these

agencies who are represented here today and doing something for the kids. It's been a couple of phases. It was a bit aggressive to envision something that we see here today and it wouldn't have been possible without the governing agencies and the commitment and dedication from the community of Kagman. So, we appreciate that very much."

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, three young individuals involved in the park

also shared their comments and gratitude and one of them was youth basketball leader Reed Camacho.

"I couldn't be more excited about what's happening to our Kagman Community Center. Listen, I know some people might say it's just a renovation. But to me, it's so much more. It's an investment in our community and in our kids' future. It's about giving them a place to play and make memories that will last a lifetime.

So, hats off to everyone who made this happen. Our park has never looked better and I can't wait to see what adventures await us here."

And he wasn't the only one who felt that way as stealing the hearts of many at the ceremony, elementary student and DYS after-school participant

Nhalia Raas and her peers took the stage to say a big thank you for the playground.

"Thank you for those who helped and had the idea to do it. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did," she said, to which all the kids shouted together, "Thank you for the new playground!"

Tokens, credit/debit cards accepted by 'Taste' vendors

Enjoying yourselves at the 25th Annual Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival will be easier than ever this year with the acceptance of credit/debit cards by all food and drink vendors for the first time. Taste tokens will also still be accepted and may now be purchased at the Marianas Visitors Authority office or at the festival.

Taste of The Marianas is an annual signature event of the MVA and will be held every Saturday night during May Tourism Month 2024 at American Memorial Park in Garapan. The festival is a gourmet's delight, offering some of the destination's best cuisine and entertainment. The festival will feature affordable dishes from local hotels and restaurants, live entertainment, food eating competitions, cooking contests, arts and crafts sales, and more. Entry is free.

"We're pleased to announce that the MVA is coordinating the use of a mobile card reader and contactless POS by all food and drink vendors at Taste of The Marianas this year, a big step forward in convenience for our festival-goers, who can now skip the token line if they want to use a credit or debit card. No cash transactions between vendors and customers will be permitted. Tokens will also still be accepted and can be purchased with cash or credit or debit card," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion.

The minimum purchase amount is determined by each vendor.

"Our goal is always to make our MVA signature events better, and this is one way to do that, especially as 'Taste' continues to grow in popularity and attendance each year," said Concepcion. "At the same time, the virtual terminal allows nightly sales to be shared with the Dept. of Finance in lieu of issuance of receipts, and it helps the MVA quantify our return on investment for this event."

Tokens may be purchased at the Marianas Visitors Authority office at 3366 Beach Road, Garapan from 1pm to 4pm Monday through Friday (except holidays).

This year's festival will include several contests: the Subway Sandwich Challenge on May 4, the Oh My Grill (OMG) International Food Challenge pitting top winners from The Subway Sandwich Challenge against celebrity food fighters from Korea and Japan on May 11, and the Marianas Chefs Competition on May 18. Rules and registration forms are available at <https://www.mymarianas.com/taste-of-the-marianas-2024/> and at the MVA offices in Saipan, Tinian and Rota. The HANMI-NMTEch Pastry Chef Competition will be held on May 25. All contests start at 7pm.

This year's festival eateries will include 38 Mitsubachi, Smokeout by Apu, Cup Bab Korean Restaurant, Ben-Ki, Yaya's Baked Goods, CK Smokehouse and Salad, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Fork and Spoon, Great Harvest Bread Co., Herman's Modern Bakery, Lanlan Tea House, Island Grindz, Java Joe's, Kanto 10, Kinpachi, Loco & Taco, Tupu Cane Juice, New Matty's BBQ, Oh My Grill, Surf Club, T-Bar, The Hut, Vi-Lyn's BBQ, Saipan World Resort, Ever Trust 123 Food, Aqua Resort Club, Pacific Islands Club and Coral Ocean Resort Saipan, MARPAC, Napu Brewing, and WSTCO.

Festival Gold Sponsors are American Memorial Park, Bridge Capital LLC and Dave Electronics Center. Silver Sponsors are Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, EST Rental, IT&E, HANMI, Jonny's Bar and Grill, M&C LLC, Lanlan Tea House, Subway, Coca-Cola, and Foremost.

For more information, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Ray Villagomez at rvillagomez@mymarianas.com or at (670) 664-3200. (PR)

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Hafa Adair
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

HANMI ecstatic about resumed flights from China

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands is eagerly looking forward to the first flights to the Marianas from China since before the pandemic.

Hong Kong Airlines will resume direct Hong Kong-Saipan flights on Sunday, April 28, with the first flight arriving at Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport in the early morning hours of

Monday, April 29.

"Our members are ecstatic about the reinstatement of Hong Kong Airlines' exclusive direct service to Saipan, marking another significant milestone in our destination's journey towards tourism recovery," said HANMI chair Dennis Seo. "We hope this is just the start of the return of all the airlines we had serving Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland before

the pandemic."

Hong Kong Airlines will operate Airbus A330 aircraft with 280 seats twice weekly, a welcome boost to a beleaguered hotel industry which registered 36% average occupancy rate in March 2024 among 12 major hotels that are part of HANMI.

"We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Hong Kong Airlines for their commitment to the Marianas," said Seo.

"We also express gratitude to the government—including the Marianas Visitors Authority—for their strong initiatives aimed at expanding and diversifying our tourism market sources. The resumption of Hong Kong Airlines' service is the start of further boosting economic recovery for both the government and private sectors."

Seo added it is important that the CNMI government

remain focused on further developing and diversifying tourism market sources.

"While the Korean market currently dominates the Marianas tourism market and Japan's return to pre-pandemic levels remains uncertain, we must continue our efforts to broaden our reach and attract visitors from diverse regions, including China," he said. "Of course, we can only return to pre-pandemic flight levels with the reinstatement the CNMI has requested of Annex VI under the U.S. Department of State's U.S.-China Air Transport Agreement of July 9, 2007. This should remain a top priority of HANMI and the private sector, the administration, Delegate Gregorio

Kilili C. Sablan's (D-MP) office, the Commonwealth Ports Authority, and all parties."

A total of 26,205 of 73,394 available room nights were sold by HANMI member hotels during March 2024 compared to 17,058 of 63,085 available rooms sold in March 2023. Average room rates were \$112.04 compared to \$132.69 last March.

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, Coral Ocean Resort, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Saipan World Resort, and Surfrider Resort Hotel. (PR)

Crowne Plaza, Saipan Mayor's Office donate \$3K apiece to 2024 MMAC



Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Basa Camacho and the Saipan's Mayor's Office pose with volunteers from the 2024 March Against Cancer after their donation of \$3,000 to the fundraising event.

The 2024 Marianas March Against Cancer announced the return of Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan as a Title Sponsor for this year's event. In a generous display of commitment to the community and the fight against cancer, Crowne Plaza has donated \$3,000 to support the MMAC's initiatives.

The 2024 March Against Cancer also announced the Saipan Mayor's Office continued support as a Title Sponsor for this year's event. The Saipan's Mayor's Office has contributed \$3,000 to the 2024 MMAC in demonstration of their unwavering support.

There will be four tiers of sponsorship packages: The first is at \$10,000, and that sponsorship is usually represented on the MMAC shirt. The second one is \$8,000-plus, the third \$3,000-plus, and fourth is \$1,000-plus. They will also recognize \$500 and up sponsorships. This includes in-kind and monetary donations.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact: mmac.sponsorship@gmail.com.

Meanwhile, there are six tiers of entry for participating teams: Pulan for families and Napu for schools, will

cost \$300 for both; Atdao for non-profits, \$399; Tano for non-profit organizations partnering with a school, educational institution or govern-

ment agency, \$500; Puti'on for corporations, \$550; and Tasi for corporations partnering with a family, non-profit organization or school, \$750. (PR)

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan has once again agreed to be a Title Sponsor of this year's 2024 Marianas March Against Cancer with a \$3,000 donation to support MMAC's initiatives.

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.7-magnitude earthquake in Guam

At 8:23pm on April 28, 2024, a 4.7-magnitude earthquake occurred at 92 kilometers east-southeast of Inarajan Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)

5.1-magnitude earthquake on Saipan

At 7:09pm April 25, 2024, a 5.1-magnitude earthquake occurred at 142 kilometers east-southeast of Saipan, Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. (PR)



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962

E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 06-2024

Opening date: April 15, 2024

Closing date: May 03, 2024

Location: SAIPAN

SALARY

Position(s): (1) Staff Engineer

UNGRADED

Nature of Work

Highly responsible for all engineering programs and activities of CPA.

This employee is responsible for the management and supervision of engineering programs and activities at the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA). Work is technical in nature and reviewed through conferences with the Executive Director or his designee and submission of reports. Employee exercises independent judgment in solutions to situations or problems in which no precedents exist. This position is unclassified.

Minimum Qualifications

Graduation from high school (or G.E.D.) and a four (4) year degree in civil engineering from an accredited U.S. college or university with no less than five (5) years of progressively responsible experience in a professional engineering level of which three (3) years pertain to supervisory experience.

Shall have no record of felony or criminal conviction.

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, May 03, 2024**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays and austerities, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

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Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) NMHC IFB 2024-006

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

Marianas High-School Career Technical Education Center Construction Project

BID SUBMISSION DATE: June 14, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Project Package will be available on April 30, 2024, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The project is funded through the Economic Development Authority (EDA), US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the CNMI Office of the Governor, Public Assistance Office (PAO). EDA and HUD funding will be utilized for the superstructure and site improvements.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMHC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office Conference located in Garapan, Saipan on **May 24, 2024, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhc.gov.net during business hours, 7:30am - 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCEDES "MARCI" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Giant Construction Corp. cited for 9 willful, 2 serious violations

TIYAN, Guam—A contractor with a history of failing to protect employees working in trenches from potentially deadly harm faces penalties of more than \$1 million after

federal investigators found employees working in trenches deeper than 5 feet without required safety equipment. Trench collapses are among the construction industry’s

most serious dangers. Excavations can collapse in seconds and lead to serious and often fatal injuries as workers are buried under cubic yards of soil, each weighing as much as

3,000 lbs. In 2022, trench collapses killed at least 39 U.S. construction workers. Despite these dangers, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health

Administration discovered employees of Giant Construction Corp., a Tamuning, Guam contractor, installing sewer lines in multiple trenches at a worksite in the Palisades Subdivision Project in Tiyan.

“Giant Construction Corp. has shown a flagrant disregard for the safety of its employees and put workers at risk of serious and potentially fatal injuries,” said OSHA Area Office director Roger Forstner

in Honolulu. “The company’s owner admits they understand the dangers but still chooses to put profit before people. The significant penalties assessed after this inspection send a clear signal to Giant Construction Corp. and other employers that OSHA will not tolerate such callous attitudes when employees are endangered.” (PR)

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

FLIGHTS

From page 1

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in welcoming the flight, performed a water salute as the huge, over 200-seater, plane pulled into the Saipan airport.

The most significant part of the inaugural flight was that Hong Kong Airlines chair Jianfeng Jeff Sun himself captained the flight so he could also personally meet with CNMI dignitaries.

In a media briefing after the flight landed at the airport, Jianfeng shared that due to the success of the first flight (which was at full capacity) and due to the demand, discussions are already being had to add additional flights from Hong Kong to Saipan as early as this summer.

Currently, Hong Kong Airlines is committed to providing two flights per week from

Hong Kong to Saipan. Meanwhile, *Saipan Tribune* learned that over 200 seats per flight have already been secured by travel agencies for the next year.

Greeting the flight yesterday morning were Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Marianas Visitor Authority representatives led by managing director Christopher A. Concepcion, and Commonwealth Ports Authority officials including executive director Leo Tudela.

In addition, members of the community came out to welcome Hong Kong Airlines’ inaugural flight to Saipan.

Apatang, in his speech, extended a warm welcome to all those aboard the inaugural flight.

“On behalf of the administration and the people of the CNMI, I want to extend our warmest welcome to all those aboard the Hong Kong Airlines inaugural flight to

our beautiful island of Saipan. This inaugural flight is a much-welcomed visit to our islands,” he said.

Concepcion, for his part, said the return of HK Airlines bodes well for the tourism industry of the CNMI.

“We are very pleased to welcome Hong Kong Airlines back to Saipan. There is a feeling of excitement and optimism in our community (especially the private sector) with the launch of these flights) we want to extend our sincerest thanks to HK Airlines for their confidence in our destination and for making these flights a reality. We’re excited about the bookings, about the discussions of additional flights, we believe this bodes very well for the tourism industry in the commonwealth and for greater expansion of connectivity between China, Hong Kong, and the Marianas,” he said.

Meanwhile, MVA board

chair Gloria Cavanagh (who had the opportunity to be part of Hong Kong Airlines’ inaugural flight back to Saipan) shared her experience with the airlines and added that she hopes its partnership with the CNMI continues to succeed.

“I’m very proud to be part of this inaugural flight back to the CNMI. I have to tell you, I’m very impressed. First, the chairman captained the flight. It was a very smooth flight and when we did experience an in-kling of turbulence even the crew were told to be safe and to sit down. It was a very professional flight, the crew was excellent, the customer service was something we can say is part of the Marianas spirit. So, we thank Hong Kong Airlines for that. We hope that because of HK Airlines, this partnership will be successful and bring us bringing us different kind of tourists to enjoy our islands,” she said.

IPI

From page 1

Deleon Guerrero said there’s a lot of public outcry to put somebody from IPI in jail.

Chi replied that he may have to resign if that’s the case.

Chi said limited receiver Clear Management has the key to the cabinet or vault where the bottles of liquor were stored.

He said majority of the liquor have been sold, but there are still some bottles of wine there.

The director said what happened was that Clear Management took out the bottles of wine from the liquor vault and left some bottles of McCallan whiskey at the casino lobby.

He said three or four days later, Clear Management no-

ticed two bottles of McCallan were missing from where they left in the casino.

Chi said after they found out what happened, he asked Clear Management to secure all the liquors that they took out from the vault and secure it in their location.

He said Clear Management secured the bottles of liquor in a storage with their own lock and that IPI has not access to the lock.

Chi said one bottle of McCallan was worth \$4,000 to \$6,000 each.

He said after Clear Management secured the bottles of liquor in their own room in a separate room with their own lock, Clear Management then held an auction and sold majority of liquors.

Chi said when the winning

bidder come to pick up the bottles of liquor, they found out that 17 bottles were missing.

“So now they’re saying oh, I should be thrown in jail because I did not secure the liquor, I did not provide enough security,” he said.

IPI creditor Joshua Gray has asked the federal court to order IPI and Chi to show cause why they should not be held in contempt for failing to comply with a court order to secure IPI’s personal property. Gray, through his counsel, said the bottles of McCallan whiskey were stolen around November or December 2023.

Gray said in February 2024, after IPI’s liquor had been auctioned, 17 bottles of Moutai—an expensive Chinese rice wine—were stolen from the casino.

Chi said it’s very frustrating because Clear Management is the only one that has access to the lock.

“We have no idea how 17 bottles of wine gone missing because it’s been locked by Clear Management the whole time,” he said.

Chi said IPI and him were told to reimburse the loss of the 17 bottles, which they claim to be worth \$100,000.

He said not only that, but because of his alleged failure to provide the security Gray is asking him to be incarcerated. “So, this is what we’re facing,” Chi said.

He said the security guards have submitted an affidavit as they have no idea about the missing bottles of liquor because they have no access to the door.

ready to go and Sablan “was able to roll it out and got some funding to get this thing done.”

He said hopefully by the end of this project, the construction of the road would go all the way up through Kalabera Cave, and then they will have the last stretch toward the Bird Island.

“That’s the whole plan and hopefully there will be resources available over the next few years or next year to get this route completely done,” Palacios said.

Apatang said the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Phase 2 of Route 36 was held last September and the ground-breaking that day, yesterday, is for

the continuation of that road that will make it convenient to drive to this part of the island.

Apatang said he and Palacios want to recognize the United States Federal Highway and Sablan for the congressional funding to make funding available for the CNMI to continue the project.

He said he is sure that RNV Construction general manager Ruel Villacrusis encountered some challenges for constructing Phase 2 of this road construction project and have learned a lot from it.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

PALACIOS

From page 1

road improvement includes travel lanes, shoulders/bike lane on each side, roadside and road drainage crossing, permanent traffic markers and signs, and other roadway appurtenances for a complete, usable and safe facility.

DPW issued the notice to proceed with the \$3.8-million project to the contractor, RNV Construction, on April 14, 2024. The expected completion date is April 14, 2025. DCA, Inc. is the design consultant.

The project is funded by

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan’s (D-MP) congressional earmark funds.

Palacios said in his remarks that this is a continuing effort by the DPW to make CNMI’s infrastructure back to par.

Palacios said there are so many projects that are now coming online, whether it’s roads or other infrastructure.

“It shows that we’re finally moving the needle,” he said.

The governor recognized the efforts and planning from DPW Secretary Ray N. Yumul and DPW Highway Division.

Palacios, on behalf of the people of the CNMI, thanked the Office of Delegate Sablan because they have the plan

during and after the meeting. I will not be leaving Saipan but will start job hunting and apartment hunting today,” said an anonymous source.

According to a former Hyatt employee, who worked for the establishment back in the early 2000s, finding out that Hyatt will be no more is shocking.

“Hyatt is one of those hotels that you think will be here on Saipan for decades to come because it’s always been here. Hearing now that they no longer will be in operation is shocking. This means many people will lose their jobs then. That is the worst part. And to think it was looking like the CNMI is recovering well with the China flights. It’s just shocking to hear this,” he said.

“I’m so sad to hear this news. It was my first working experience,” said Pauline Castro, a former Hyatt employee.

Another former Hyatt employee shared how sad she was to find out about Hyatt’s decision to close its doors.

“I worked there for almost seven years. It was my first job as well in high school. Made lots of friendships there. Grew there. It’s all sad,” she said.

Saipan Tribune also tried to reach out to government agencies like the Marianas Visitors Authority, Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, and all have yet to comment.

Back in 2021, Hyatt Regency Saipan was approved a 40-year lease renewal which took effect on Jan. 1, 2022.

Hyatt’s rental rate is about 0.5% base rent, the value of the appraised value of the properties, which is about \$50 million, plus or minus, an additional rent of 1% of their business gross receipts, and a security deposit of \$250,000.

A part of Hyatt Regency Saipan’s commitment is a contribution of \$1.5 million to a community benefit fund to be apportioned as follows: \$500,000 allotted to home-stead infrastructure; \$500,000 allotted to Garapan revitalization projects, \$200,000 allotted for scholarship of Northern Marianas descent students and \$300,000 to promote traditional arts and culture.

PNG leader takes offense after Biden implies his uncle was eaten by cannibals

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Papua New Guinea’s Prime Minister James Marape accused Joe Biden of disparaging the South Pacific island nation by implying that an uncle of the U.S. president had been eaten by “cannibals” there during World War II.

Biden’s comments offended a key strategic ally as China moves to increase its influence in the region.

The president spoke at a Pennsylvania war memorial last week about his Army Air Corps aviator uncle Second Lt. Ambrose J. Finnegan Jr., whom he

said was shot down over Papua New Guinea, which was a theater of heavy fighting.

“They never found the body because there used to be—there were a lot of cannibals for real in that part of New Guinea,” Biden said, referring to the country’s main island.

Marape said in a statement on Sunday that Biden “appeared to imply his uncle was eaten by cannibals.”

“President Biden’s remarks may have been a slip of the tongue; however, my country does not deserve to be labeled as such,” Marape said in a

statement provided by his office to The Associated Press on Monday.

“World War II was not the doing of my people; however, they were needlessly dragged into a conflict that was not their doing,” Marape added.

The rift comes as Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese began a visit on Monday to Papua New Guinea, Australia’s nearest neighbor. Albanese and Marape will commemorate strong defense ties between the two countries by walking part of a pivotal battle ground known as the Kokoda



Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape, left, listens during a meeting with Pacific Islands Forum leaders during the U.S.-Pacific Islands Forum Summit in the East Room of the White House, Monday, Sept. 25, 2023, in Washington.

Track later this week.

“I’m very confident that PNG has no stronger partner than Australia and our defense and security ties have never been stronger,” Albanese told reporters before departing Australia.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Friday Biden was speaking to the bravery of his uncle and the many U.S. service members that put their lives on the line.

“He takes this very seriously. His uncle, who served and protected this country, lost his life serving. And that should matter,” she said.

UOG agriculture majors meet top USDA directors in DC

At the U.S. Department of Agriculture headquarters on Feb. 15 in Washington, D.C., University of Guam students Charlene Badajos and Jamilee Cruz were among several students asked to stand during a speech by Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack. During his remarks at the release of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, he cited data that the average age of farmers in the country has been rising—now at 58 years old—and shared how USDA is investing heavily in the next generation of agriculture professionals.

That investment is coming through USDA’s NextGen program—which is supporting \$252 million worth of projects at Land-Grant institutions to build awareness about career opportunities in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. The University of Guam received



University of Guam agriculture majors Jamilee Cruz, left, and Charlene Badajos in the USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C., for the 100th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum on Feb. 16, 2024.

one of 33 NextGen grants and launched its project, COMPASS, in 2023.

Badajos and Cruz, both agriculture majors at UOG, are focusing their degrees on nutrition/food science and tropical agriculture production, respectively. The COMPASS

program connected them with internships and the opportunity to attend USDA’s 100th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum—the department’s largest annual gathering.

Travelling with COMPASS co-director Rachel Jolley, Badajos and Cruz met with



From left, Rachel Jolley, co-director of the COMPASS Program at the University of Guam; Manjit Misra, director of the National Institute of Food & Agriculture; and UOG agriculture majors Jamilee Cruz and Charlene Badajos on Feb. 16, 2024, at the USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

and heard from top USDA directors, including deputy secretary Xochitl Torres Small and under secretary for Research, Education, and Economics Chavonda Jacobs-Young, and National Institute of Food & Agriculture Director Manjit Misra. These

administrators shared their career paths and discussed ways that students could get experience in USDA in a variety of career paths.

“It was inspiring to learn about the hardships many of the USDA leaders endured in their educational career since

their determination ultimately led them to where they are today,” Badajos said.

The NextGen students also toured the National Agricultural Research Center and the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Md., learning about research instruments, library research tools, and potential career opportunities with USDA.

For Cruz, who is originally from Palau, it was her first time travelling outside of the region. She said the trip expanded her curiosity and increased her confidence in agriculture as her major and career path to serve her community.

“The leaders who sat in their seats in front of us did not know they would end up working in the USDA,” Cruz said. “Sanah Baig, deputy under secretary for research, education, and economics, shared that you must be your authentic self to enjoy your career and succeed. I feel that I belong in agriculture more than any major.” (PR)



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary	Opening Date	Closing Date
2024-013	CDBG-DR Planning & Support Program Manager (1-Position) Re-Announcement	UNGRADED \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 Per annum	April 24, 2024	May 9, 2024 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB No.: 42400087

SUBMISSION DATE: May 30, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**“Construction of Sidewalk Extension
in Tanapag along Route 30.”**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.


The project package will be available on or after **April 30, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **May 17, 2024, 9:00 a.m. ChST**, at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. ChST, on May 24, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/RAY N. YUMUL
Secretary, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of
Procurement Services



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Statewide Independent Living Council
“Yes I Can!”

P.O. BOX 501521, SAIPAN, MP 95950; TEL: (670) 322-6537/8 FAX: (670) 322-6536 TTY: (670) 322-6449; E-MAIL: nmidir@ovrgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9910, the public is advised that the Statewide Independent Living Council will hold its FY 2024 Second General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, May 01, 2024 – 10:00am - 1:30pm Venue: Aqua Resort Club – Paluma Room Interested individuals are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Review and Adoption of May 01, 2024 Agenda

IV. Review and Adoption of SILC’s FY’24 1st General Membership Meeting Minutes of March 06, 2024

V. Reports

a. SILC Chairperson

b. OVR Director

c. CLI Director

VI. Old Business

a. State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) Update

b. 2024 SILC Congress Conference update

c. Tinian membership update

d. NCIL Conference

VII. New Business

a. Election of Fiscal Officer

b. Membership (Expired/new appointments)

VIII. Announcements/Miscellaneous

IX. Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend the meeting but require accommodations such as large print or sign language interpreters are asked to call James M. Rayphand, OVR Director at 322-6537/6538 or email jimbo@ovrgov.net for necessary arrangements in advance before the meeting date.

Publication of this notice is paid for by federal funds made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (DHHS/ACL), Grant #2301MPILSG.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Pregnant women are not incubators. Antiabortion states should not deny them emergency care

It's absurd that in the 21st century, the Supreme Court is debating how close to death pregnant women need to be before doctors can perform a medically necessary abortion.

But that's where we are nearly two years after this same court in the Dobbs decision overturned the constitutional right to an abortion—and launched a profusion of state abortion laws that range from repressive to downright dystopian. On Wednesday, the Supreme Court heard arguments in a case challenging a law in Idaho that falls into the latter category. It outlaws all abortions except in the case of rape and incest (and then, only in the first trimester of pregnancy) or when a patient is in danger of dying if they don't have an abortion. Doctors who violate that could face up to five years in prison.

But that death exception conflicts with the 1986 federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act—known as EMTALA. Under the law, emergency rooms in hospitals that receive Medicare funding (which most do) must treat and stabilize a person who has an urgent medical condition. A patient can be transferred elsewhere if medical resources are lacking at the hospital.

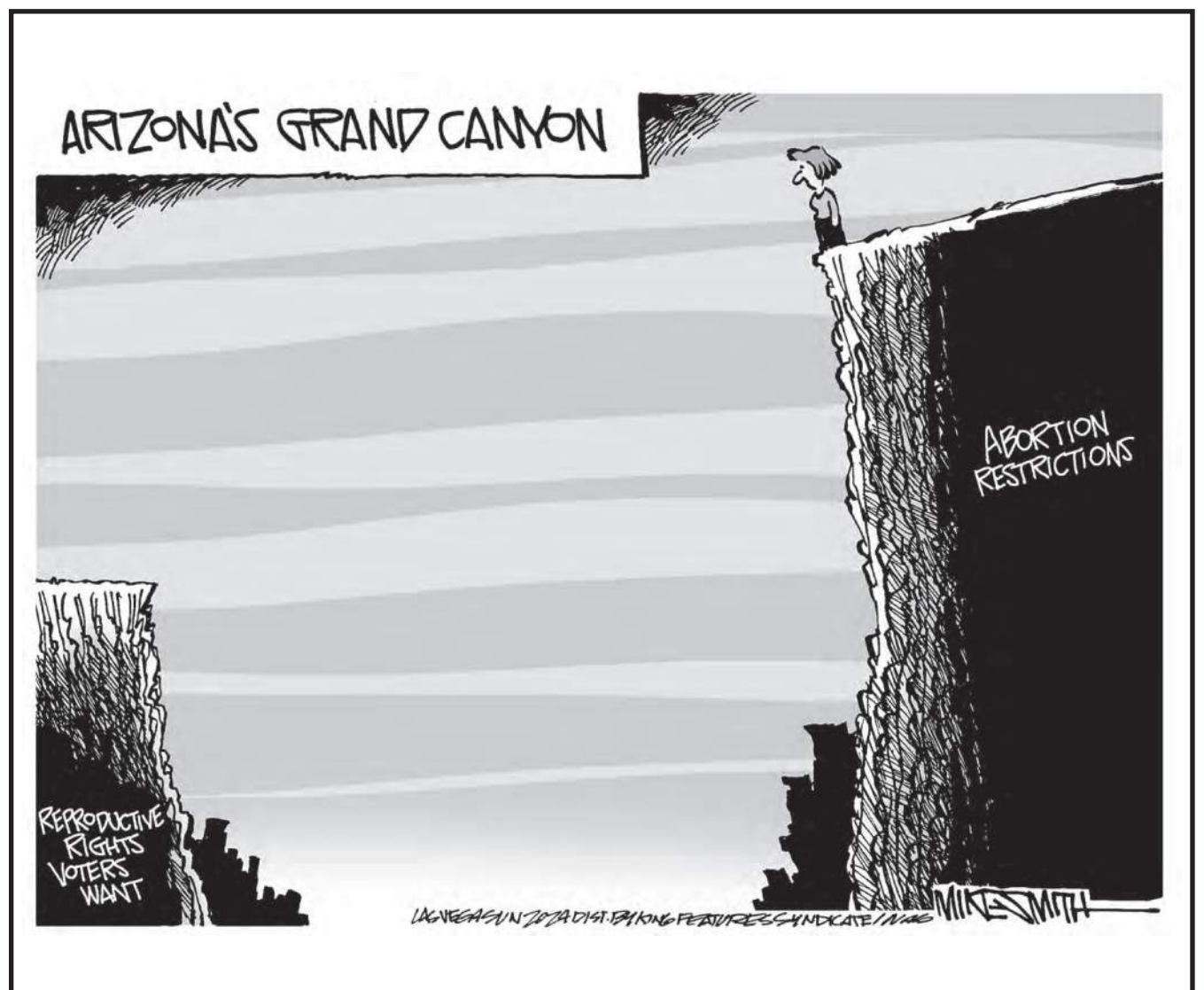
Abortion care in the ER wasn't much of an issue before Dobbs. Now it is. The Biden administration argued in federal court that the portion of the Idaho ban that allows abortion only to stave off death is a violation of the law. EMTALA does not require that the serious medical condition be life-threatening. A federal court agreed and ruled that portion of the ban unenforceable. The Supreme Court put that lower court ruling on hold until it decides the case.

"Today, doctors in Idaho and the women in Idaho are in an impossible position," said U.S. Solicitor Gen. Elizabeth Prelogar, arguing for the U.S. on Wednesday. "If a woman comes to an emergency room facing a grave threat to her health, but she isn't yet facing death, doctors either have to delay treatment and allow her condition to materially deteriorate, or they're airlifting her out of the state so she can get the emergency care that she needs."

Fortunately, both liberal and conservative justices seem skeptical of the argument by Joshua Turner, representing the state of Idaho, that the federal government was overreaching by telling Idaho doctors how to practice medicine instead of letting them follow state medical licensing laws. "If ER doctors can perform whatever treatment they determine is appropriate, then doctors can ignore not only state abortion laws but also state regulations on opioid use and informed consent requirements," he said.

That's ludicrous, but this whole issue is ludicrous. Turner seemed to suggest that even under the abortion ban, doctors

See **PREGNANT** on Page 7



Republicans aren't protecting elections. They don't want democracy

The next time Speaker Mike Johnson stands in front of a microphone to talk about election integrity, I want you to remember this: Nearly a third of voters in Louisiana are Black, and yet Black voters had control over less than 20% of the state's congressional districts. White voters make up less than 60% of the electorate yet had control over more than 80% of the power.

When the Democratic governor vetoed attempts to suppress the Black vote, the Republican state Legislature overrode the veto. When a federal judge said another map should be drawn, the Supreme Court delayed action until it had decided a similar question about Alabama.

In that state, Black people are more than a quarter of the population but had control over just one of the state's seven districts. For two years, Alabama fought to dilute the Black vote, until the highest court of the land rejected the state's final plea for a gerrymandered map.

Johnson's party has been working to suppress Black votes for decades, so what is he talking about when he trumpets "election integrity"?

His appearance with former President Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago earlier this month was ostensibly about an election reform bill, meant to address a crisis those two men love to hype: the claim that millions of noncitizens are voting in our elections. The facts show that claim isn't true. What is true is that within months of taking office in 2017, Trump established a commission to investigate his unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2016 election, and the Republican-led group—which included a handful of conservative secretaries of state—didn't find anything.

It's also true that we are approaching the 60th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the same Jim Crow states that opposed Black people voting then are the same states in court today opposing Black representation.

That includes Louisiana, the state Mike "Election Integrity" Johnson hails from.

During the civil rights movement, the Louisiana congressman James Morrison, a Democrat, voted in favor of the Voting Rights Act. He suddenly became vulnerable in the primary. Morrison went on to accuse his opponent John R. Rarick of being a mem-

By **LZ GRANDERSON**

Los Angeles Times

LZ Granderson is an Op-Ed columnist for the Los Angeles Times.



ber of the Ku Klux Klan, which the FBI confirmed. Morrison lost anyway, and Rarick won the seat. In 1973 Rarick introduced a bill in the House to repeal the Civil Rights Act. In 1988 David Duke, a Grand Wizard of the KKK, ran for president. In 2022 a map was drawn to suppress the Black vote. In January a new map to include a second Black district was approved. In February there was another lawsuit to try to stop it.

Those Southern states have been consistent in their agenda. In Rarick's day some of the bad actors, including him, were Democrats, but now the cause has been taken up by Republicans. And why is today's GOP so concerned about "protecting" elections? Why are they fighting so hard to stop democracy? Because they don't want a democratic outcome. They want white control.

Johnson wants you to believe it's the desperate migrants and asylum seekers at the southern border who are the greatest threat to democracy.

No, Mr. Speaker: It is and always has been racism. It's baked into our nation.

When you look up the origins of the electoral college on the National Archives website, it tells you that "the Founding Fathers established it in the Constitution, in part, as a compromise between the election of the President by a vote in Congress and election of the President by a popular vote of qualified citizens."

However, what it doesn't say is why a compromise was needed in the first place. If the majority of people have already spoken in the election, why does Congress need a say? The answer is rooted in what William Buckley wrote in his 1957 essay "Why the South Must Prevail": "It is more important for any commu-

See **REPUBLICANS** on Page 7

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

NMPASI's podcast: 'Advocacy Amplified'

The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. proudly presents "Advocacy Amplified," a podcast series dedicated to providing a platform to empower and educate the community on the importance of disability advocacy and awareness. Hosted by NMPASI's projects specialists Tiava To'omota and Joshua Meneses, "Advocacy Amplified" offers listeners a unique opportunity to delve into the heart of advocacy work. Through candid conversations, the podcast sheds light on the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and the resources

available to support them.

Why a podcast, you may ask? We believe that a podcast is an excellent source of outreach for several reasons. Firstly, it's accessible. In a digital age where information is at our fingertips, a podcast allows listeners to engage with content at their convenience, whether they're at home, commuting, or on the go. This accessibility ensures that our message reaches a wide and diverse audience, including those who may face barriers to traditional forms of communication. With the use of accessible features, an example being close captions, we can convey our message to both the disability community and the general public.

Secondly, a podcast is a powerful storytelling tool. By sharing both personal and professional experiences and insights, "Advocacy Amplified" connects with listeners on a deeper level, fostering empathy, understanding, and solidarity. Through the medium of audio, we have the opportunity to humanize advocacy work, making it relatable and relevant to our community, and to prove that everyone can be an advocate. This interactive aspect fosters engagement and collaboration, turning passive listeners into active participants in the advocacy journey.

In the upcoming episode scheduled to drop this coming May 1st, 2024, "Advocacy Amplified" will focus on NMPASI's Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness program, as well as Mental Health Awareness Month. Featuring

By TIAVA TO'OMOTA

Projects Specialist



Philip Santos, the lead family Cordinator at the Commonwealth Health Center-Community Guidance Center, and the lead for CNMI Mental Health Awareness Month planning, the episode promises to be both informative and inspiring. Whether you're a seasoned advocate or someone eager to learn more, "Advocacy Amplified" hopes to offer valuable insights for all.

So mark your calendars and join us on May 1 as we amplify disability advocacy and mental health awareness. Together, let's raise our voices and make a difference in our community. For more information and to listen to previous episodes, visit NMPASI's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NMPASI or our Instagram profile @NMPASI670. Additionally, you can contact NMPASI on our office numbers at (670) 235-7273/74.

REPUBLICANS

From page 6

nity, anywhere in the world, to affirm and live by civilized standards, than to bow to the demands of the numerical majority."

Need I remind you of what was considered "civilized standards" in the South in 1957? Need I remind you how little has changed?

That's by design—from the establishment of the electoral college to today. If Johnson cares about protecting democracy, the facts point to where he should start. Other lawmakers are ahead of him.

Maine recently became the 17th state, in addition to the District of Columbia, to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, an effort to have the popular vote—and not the electoral college—determine who wins the White House. There is still a question of whether this attempt to rid the country of the racist electoral college requires congressional approval. But it does demonstrate a hunger for democracy.

"I struggle to reconcile the fact that a candidate who has fewer actual votes than their opponent can still become president of the United States," Gov. Janet Mills of Maine said in a statement recently. "It seems to me that the person who wins the most votes should become the president. To do otherwise seemingly runs counter to the democratic foundations of our country."

While I agree with her sentiment, the electoral college wasn't counter to foundations. Concessions to appease racism are written throughout the Constitution. The electoral college is just one of a number of examples.

The border crisis has nothing to do with what has always been democracy's biggest threat.

PREGNANT

From page 6

could decide to perform abortions in cases where pregnant women weren't quite at death's door but were, well, close enough.

But how close is close? Is a ruptured amniotic sac, which could lead to infection, sepsis and a possible hysterectomy, enough of a reason to do an abortion? Or do doctors have to wait until the person is hemorrhaging uncontrollably?

Turner's argument that doctors use their judgment to determine that on a case-by-case basis isn't reassuring. As Justice Sonia Sotomayor noted, that puts doctors in an unfair bind. For example, "your doctor says, I can't, with a medical certainty, say she's going to die, but I do know she's going to bleed to death if we don't have an abortion, but she's not bleeding yet, so I'm not sure."

There is now an alarmingly large swath of the country living with laws crafted with the patriarchal view that pregnant women are little more than vessels for what abortion opponents oxymorically refer to as "unborn children."

Idaho's restrictive abortion ban has done enough damage by upending reproductive healthcare across the state, but it should not be allowed to withhold abortion care from people whose lives will be gravely harmed without it. We hope that the Supreme Court agrees that all Americans, pregnant or not, should have equal access to what Prelogar called the "simple but profound" promise of EMTALA—the stabilizing emergency medical care they need.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR**Truth 42: Using our \$\$\$ to beat a DEAD Horse!**

The TRUTH of the matter is most adults have heard of the wisdom in "beating a dead horse or throwing good money after bad," which is what WE the People continue experiencing with the IPI fiasco! Like most citizens I KNOW that gambling is NOT the direction we should be pursuing ever since it surfaced under the leadership of the late Honorable Bishop Thomas Camacho's teachings. I was honored & glad to have helped him fight against the casino and I was even more glad to see the Chinese Government ordering the dismantling of IPI's mother company and their previous statement that "the Chinese Government was NOT going to allow their citizens to travel to the CNMI for the purpose of gambling." Now if I'm missing something, I hope someone will speak up and rectify what I see as pure political & economic dichotomies (contradictions) with IPI determined to continue with a casino and the Chinese Government is virtually saying NO! The question is WHAT is our government going to do and I pray not to just sit, watch & wait for someone in China to decide our fate for us AGAIN! When are WE going to be the Masters-of-our-economic-fate, which is what we teach children to do in school - duh!!!

The Casino Commission has also claimed to "suspend their services until further notice" and I want to know along with other citizens is "can We the People also suspend the Casino Commissioner's salaries of 74,000 a year until further notice" given the fact that our government is literally counting pennies. If WE the people are to pay these commissioners, it is truly a WASTE of throwing our money away like We have witnessed with other Casino Commissioners on Rota & Tinian who were being paid for NOTHING – it makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up to think about this kind of waste of OUR money in the hundreds of thousands! I Told Readers So nearly two years ago when it was obvious to me that the casino was dead in the water, that these commissioners were just going to extend the life of their jobs by playing legal games with IPI. Our Governor even knows IPI is dead and that WE need to change our sailing direction for better economic opportunities, especially when one of the companies that was supplying workers for IPI was partly owned by the Chinese Government that is part of the still pending RICO Case. I've always been ahead of the times and I know WE still have a lot to settle-up with Ralph.

The CNMI needs to be DONE with IPI like the Governor

said given all the trouble IPI has caused so WE can have a plan to "Start-A-New," like a "Convention Center that can attract large numbers of group tourists" and serve as the premier location for Local events. But whatever is done, it needs to be in a different direction from gambling, as you would think that a society which is predominantly Catholic that gambling would be suppressed instead of being "our politicians' economic staple" but that's a story for another day. However, Republicans have RUINED Tinian's Casino and the CNMI with their Saipan casino idea and they continue sabotaging the CNMI's politics. Just look at what they did to sabotage Democrats and what WE are learning Ralph did to us and now what just happened with Mr. Gonzales which is why I'm no longer involved in our dirty politics. But I pray for the CNMI's future that voters will seriously think about giving Democrats & Independents a chance and "too-you-know-where with Republicans" even those in D.C. who are messed-up rooting for Trump facing 88 Indictments!!!

But the main thing is WE must stop beating the dead-horse-casino that has literally taken up almost an entire decade while the People have very little to show from IPI. No one said a word about OUR 77- million owed to the People and now it may be too late, as I was telling the CC two years ago to acquire IPI stock for their debts to the CNMI in case IPI filed Bankruptcy, but who listens to me. I was the only one complaining about our 77-million and bringing other issues to the forefront, but they (our leaders) pretend to have never read the Op ed nor heard of what I wrote, which most of us with common sense know is a LIE! They hate my "Ali-style" in the newspaper and not being a local led to "kill the messenger and to hell with his message" - for TRUE! But Local people pay the cost while time has proved me and many others to be right about the casino and only time will tell when our leaders & voters will change for the better – as Time has always been on Myside to prove me RIGHT! One People One Direction.

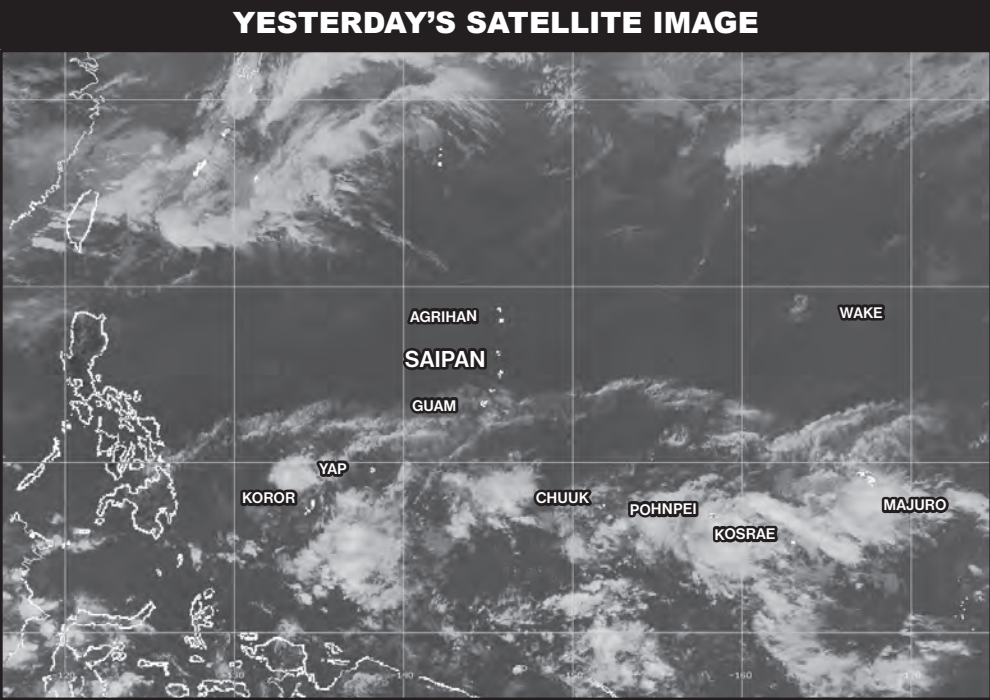
Ambrose M. Bennett

Kagman III

Editor's note: Letter to the editor is written in the artistic style of caps by the author and his language of Ebonics.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	
89°	78°	89°	78°	88°	78°	88°	78°	88°	78°



PICTURE TIME: 6:12 AM MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery is showing partly cloudy skies and spotty trade showers across the Marianas this morning. Latest altimetry data is indicating seas of 5 to 7 feet to the east and west of the coastal waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	89° / 79°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°	
Yap	Showers	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Light Rain	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	88° / 79°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
Majuro	Cloudy	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:54 AM	6:34 PM
Wednesday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Thursday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Friday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM
Saturday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:48 AM	-
Wednesday	12:22 AM	11:50 AM	-
Thursday	1:12 AM	12:50 PM	-
Friday	1:58 AM	1:49 PM	-
Saturday	2:41 AM	2:47 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	66° / 55°	
Beijing	Fair	62° / 49°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	83° / 75°	
Honolulu	Windy	83° / 72°	
London	Rain	55° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	84° / 63°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	97° / 81°	
Melbourne	Rain	55° / 46°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	83° / 77°	
New York	Showers	73° / 55°	
Osaka	Cloudy	80° / 65°	
Paris	Showers	64° / 48°	
Busan	Rain	70° / 56°	
Rome	Showers	66° / 52°	
Salem	Thunderstorm	75° / 51°	
San Francisco	Windy	62° / 52°	
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 60°	
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	81° / 65°	
Washington, DC	Fair	84° / 56°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:23 AM	High Tide	1.83	
6:31 AM	Low Tide	1.49	
10:31 AM	High Tide	1.73	
6:31 PM	Low Tide	-0.09	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2024				
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174 8:00AM 8:45AM Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN
UA824	7:10AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825 9:25PM 1:50AM+1 2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	PR110 10:30PM 4:25AM+1 Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184 10:25PM 4:10AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	UA192 10:25PM 6:15AM+1 2, 5 via Palau
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174 10:25PM 8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174 10:25PM 8:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406 11:10PM 3:10PM+1 Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN
TW308	3:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3406 9:30AM 3:10PM Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307 8:30PM 2:15AM+1 Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3404 10:10PM 3:40AM+1 Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.					
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024					
SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Instagram, YouTube likely winners of TikTok ban but smaller rivals could rise too

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
AP Technology Writer

Adult U.S. TikTok users spend an average of 54 minutes on the app on any given day, more than Instagram, Snapchat or YouTube, according to research firm eMarketer. If TikTok were to disappear, those platforms — along with younger, smaller emerging rivals — would be scrambling for those valuable minutes of

people's attention.

But with an actual ban still likely years away, it's not clear what app will be its biggest beneficiary. Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, may see more advertisers amid uncertainty for its biggest rival, according to analysts who follow the company. Creators, dealing with uncertainty themselves are also expanding to other platforms if they weren't

140,000 people did their taxes with free IRS direct file pilot

WASHINGTON (AP)—The IRS said Friday that more than 140,000 taxpayers filed their taxes through its new direct file pilot program and participants saved roughly \$5.6 million in fees they would have otherwise spent with commercial tax preparation companies.

The government pilot program, rolled out this tax season in 12 states, allows people with very simple W-2s to calculate and submit their returns directly to the IRS for free. Those using the program claimed more than \$90 million in refunds, the IRS said.

But despite what IRS and Treasury Department officials said was a successful rollout, they aren't saying yet whether the program will be available next year for more taxpayers. They say they need to evaluate the data on whether building out the program is feasible.

"We will take time to analyze the data and collect feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders before making a decision about direct file's future," IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel said on a call with reporters.

The program, which became available to the public on March 8, cost roughly \$10.5 million for technology and product development and another \$2.4 million for customer service, cloud computing and user authentication.

While the Treasury set a goal of reaching 100,000 users for the pilot, 140,803 completed their taxes using the program. More than 3 million people used the IRS' eligibility tracker to see if they could use the program, and 423,450 people logged

into the program.

"Regardless of where it goes from here, I am proud of the success of the direct file pilot," Werfel said.

Commercial tax prep companies that have lobbied against development of the free file program say free file options already exist.

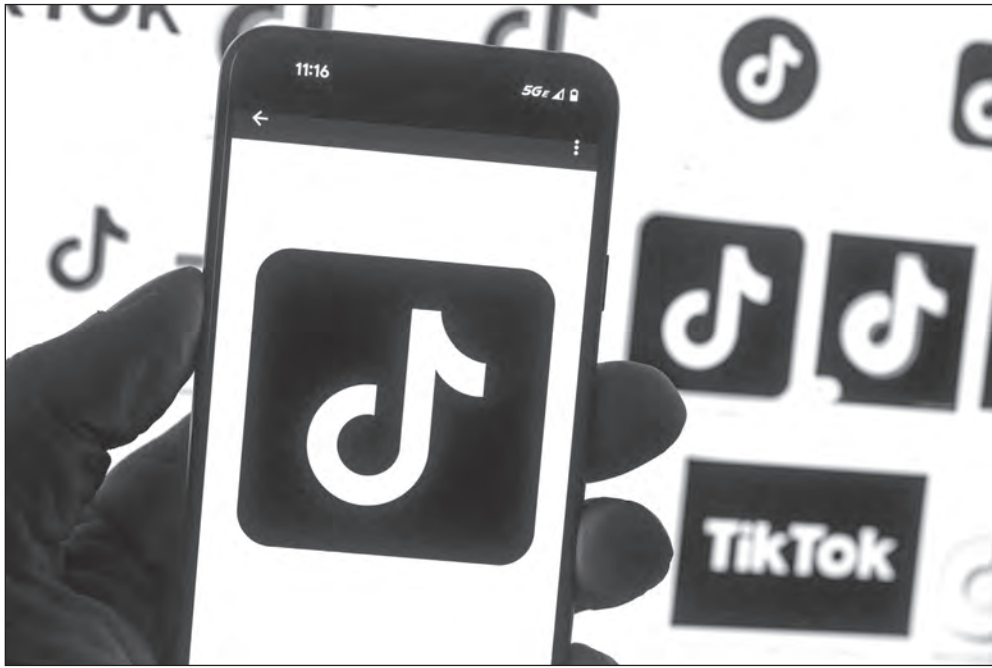
Intuit spokesman Rick Heineman said "the reality remains the same today as it did the day Direct File launched; 100% of Americans can already file their taxes completely free of charge, free to the government and actually free to taxpayers."

Several organizations, including private tax firms, offer free online tax preparation assistance to taxpayers under certain income limits and fillable forms are available online on the IRS website, but the forms are complicated and taxpayers still have to calculate their tax liability.

The tax season began on Jan. 29, and the filing deadline for most people was April 15.

The program was available to certain taxpayers in Florida, New Hampshire, Nevada, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Wyoming. Four other states that have a state income tax also were part of the pilot program—Arizona, Massachusetts, California and New York. In those four, state tax agencies helped people directly file their state taxes as well.

According to the latest IRS data, this tax season the agency has received 119.5 million returns, compared with 117.3 million received in the same timeframe last year. Refunds this tax season add up to \$220 billion, compared with \$215 billion last year.



The TikTok logo is displayed on a mobile phone in front of a computer screen, Oct. 14, 2022, in Boston.

already. But users, especially the younger ones who are TikTok's bread and butter, are less predictable. Will they embrace Instagram, a possibly uncool mom favorite? Or could a newer app like Triller rise to viral fame?

Here's a look at some notable TikTok alternatives and how they measure up.

INSTAGRAM

Meta has a long tradition of cloning competitive services, with varying degrees of success. The Instagram "Story" feature, which lets people share photos and videos that

expire in 24 hours, is similar to Snapchat. The company also launched a TikTok knock-off called Lasso in 2018 but closed that down in 2020.

Then Instagram launched Reels 2020, a TikTok-like feed of short videos users can create or scroll through. It's proven to be massively popular. Could it replace TikTok? That depends. While many creators post on both platforms, some experts say the youngest users are unlikely to migrate to a service made popular by their millennial parents. And while Meta's algorithm is addictive, it's still not TikTok.

"Replicating TikTok's algorithm is a nearly impossible task, as rival Meta would attest to," said eMarketer analyst Jasmine Enberg. "TikTok's ability to serve up relevant and entertaining content to its users is unparalleled in the social media world."

YOUTUBE

While TikTok gets more headlines, YouTube still dominates U.S. teens' attention. Roughly nine in ten teens said they use YouTube, in a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, making it the most widely used platform among

the 13-17 crowd. TikTok clocked in at 63%, Snapchat at 60% and Instagram at 59%. Its parent company Google launched YouTube Shorts in 2020, shortly after India banned TikTok.

YouTube users can scroll through Shorts just as they can on TikTok or Reels on Instagram and Facebook, watching hours of bite-sized videos. As with Reels, many of the videos featured are from TikTok or creators who post to several different platforms. That said, YouTube is still known for its longer-format videos, so it may not have the variety that TikTok users are looking for—at least not yet.

SNAPCHAT

While older adults never quite got into Snapchat, launched in 2011 with its infamous disappearing videos, it remains popular among teens and younger adults. In addition to its disappearing video feature, the company launched Snapchat Spotlight in 2020 (yes, the same year India banned TikTok and former U.S. President Donald Trump was trying to in the U.S.). The feature can be accessed by pressing the sideways triangle icon at the bottom of your screen and, at least according to Snapchat, it "shines a light on the most entertaining Snaps, no matter who created them."

Biden officials indefinitely postpone ban on menthol cigarettes

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden's administration is indefinitely delaying a long-awaited menthol cigarette ban, a decision that infuriated anti-smoking advocates but could avoid a political backlash from Black voters in November.

In a statement Friday, Biden's top health official gave no timeline for issuing the rule, saying only that the administration would take more time to consider feedback, including from civil rights groups.

"It's clear that there are still more conversations to have, and that will take significantly more time," Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement.

The White House has held dozens of meetings in recent months with groups opposing the ban, including civil rights organizers, law enforcement officials and small business owners. Most of groups have financial ties to

tobacco companies.

The announcement is another setback for Food and Drug Administration officials, who drafted the ban and predicted it would prevent hundreds of thousands of smoking-related deaths over 40 years. The agency has worked toward banning menthol across multiple administrations without ever finalizing a rule.

"This decision prioritizes politics over lives, especially Black lives," said Yolonda Richardson of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, in an emailed statement. "It is especially disturbing to see the administration parrot the false claims of the tobacco industry about support from the civil rights community."

Richardson noted that the ban is supported by groups including the NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Previous FDA efforts on menthol have been derailed by tobacco industry pushback or competing political priorities.

With both Biden and former President Donald Trump vying for the support of Black voters, the ban's potential impact has been scrutinized by Republicans and Democrats heading into the fall election.

Anti-smoking advocates have been pushing the FDA to eliminate the flavor since the agency gained authority to regulate certain tobacco ingredients in 2009. Menthol is the only cigarette flavor that wasn't banned under that law, a carveout negotiated by industry allies in Congress. But the law instructed the FDA to continue studying the issue.

More than 11% of U.S. adults smoke, with rates roughly even between white and Black people. But about 80% of Black smokers smoke menthol, which the FDA says masks the harshness of smoking, making it easier to start and harder to quit. Also, most teenagers who smoke cigarettes prefer menthols.

For decades, tobacco com-

panies focused menthol advertising and promotions in Black communities, sponsoring music festivals and neighborhood events. Industry documents released via litigation also show companies viewed menthol cigarettes as a good "starter product" because they were more palatable to teens.

The FDA released its draft of the proposed ban in 2022. Officials under Biden initially targeted last August to finalize the rule. Late last year, White House officials said they would take until March to review the measure. When that deadline passed last month, several anti-smoking groups filed a lawsuit to force its release.

"We are disappointed with the action of the Biden administration, which has caved in to the scare tactics of the tobacco industry," said Dr. Mark Mitchell of the National Medical Association, an African American physician group that is suing the administration.

World

Millions of Afghans made Pakistan home to escape war

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—Born and raised in Pakistan to parents who fled neighboring Afghanistan half a century ago, an 18-year-old found himself at the mercy of police in Karachi who took his cash, phone and motorbike, and sent him to a deportation center.

Scared and bewildered, he spent three days there before he was sent back to Afghan-

istan, a place he has never been to, with nothing but clothes on his back.

The youth is one of at least 1.7 million Afghans who made Pakistan their home as their country sank deeper into decades of war. But they've been living there without legal permission, and are now the target of a harsh crackdown on migrants who

Pakistan says must leave.

Some 600,000 Afghans have returned home since last October, when the crackdown began, meaning at least a million remain in Pakistan in hiding. They've retreated from public view, abandoning their jobs and rarely leaving their neighborhoods out of fear they could be next for deportation.

It's harder for them to earn

» **Now many are hiding to escape deportation**

money, rent accommodation, buy food or get medical help because they run the risk of getting caught by police or being reported to authorities by Pakistanis.

The youth, who had been

working as a mechanic in an auto shop since he was 15, spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of arrest and deportation.

He has applied for the same documentation that his family has, but he won't get it. Pakistan isn't issuing paperwork for Afghan refugees or their children.

"My life is here. I have no friends or family in Afghanistan, nothing," the young man told The Associated Press. "I wanted to come back (to Pakistan) sooner, but things had to calm down first," he said, referring to the anti-migrant raids sweeping the country at the time.

Taliban authorities gave him 2,500 afghanis (\$34) once

he entered Afghanistan to start a new life. They dispatched him to northeastern Takhar province, where he slept in mosques and religious schools because he knew nobody to stay with. He passed his time playing cricket and football, and borrowed other people's phones to call his family.

Six weeks later, he traveled from Takhar to the Afghan capital, Kabul, then to eastern Nangarhar province. He walked for hours in the dark before meeting up with human smugglers hired by his brother in Pakistan. Their job was to get him to Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, for the price of \$70.

Biden, Netanyahu speak as pressure's on Israel over planned Rafah invasion, cease-fire talks

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP)—The White House on Sunday said U.S. President Joe Biden had again spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as pressure builds on Israel and Hamas to reach a deal that would free some Israeli hostages and bring a cease-fire in the nearly seven-month-long war in Gaza.

The White House said that Biden reiterated his "clear position" as Israel plans to invade Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah despite global concern for more than 1 million Pal-

estinians sheltering there. The U.S. opposes the invasion on humanitarian grounds, straining relations between the allies. Israel is among the countries U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit as he returns to the Middle East on Monday.

Biden also stressed that progress in delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza be "sustained and enhanced," according to the statement. The call lasted just under an hour, and they agreed the onus remains on Hamas to accept the latest offer in negotiations,

according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to comment publicly. There was no comment from Netanyahu's office.

A senior official from key intermediary Qatar, meanwhile, urged Israel and Hamas to show "more commitment and more seriousness" in negotiations. Qatar, which hosts Hamas' headquarters in Doha, was instrumental along with the U.S. and Egypt in helping negotiate a brief halt to the fighting in November that

led to the release of dozens of hostages. But in a sign of frustration, Qatar this month said that it was reassessing its role.

An Israeli delegation is expected in Egypt in the coming days to discuss the latest proposals in negotiations, and senior Hamas official Basem Naim said in a message to The Associated Press that a delegation from the militant group will also head to Cairo. Egypt's state-owned Al Qahera News satellite television channel said that the delegation would arrive on Monday.

WORLD BRIEFS

Putin likely didn't order death of Russian opposition leader Navalny, US official says

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. intelligence officials have determined that Russian President Vladimir Putin likely didn't order the death of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny in February, according to an official familiar with the determination. While U.S. officials believe Putin was ultimately responsible for the death of Navalny, who endured brutal conditions during his confinement, the intelligence community has found "no smoking gun" that Putin was aware of the timing of Navalny's death—which came soon before the Russian president's reelection—or directly ordered it, according to the official. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter. Soon after Navalny's death, U.S. President Joe Biden said Putin was ultimately responsible but did not accuse the Russian president of directly ordering it. At the time, Biden said the U.S. did not know exactly what had happened to Navalny but that "there is no doubt" that his death "was the consequence of something that Putin and his thugs did." Navalny, 47, Russia's best-known opposition politician and Putin's most persistent foe, died Feb. 16 in a remote penal colony above the Arctic Circle while serving a 19-year sentence on extremism charges that he rejected as politically motivated.

Spain is in suspense waiting for Pedro Sánchez to say whether he

will resign or stay in office

MADRID (AP)—Spain is in nail-biting suspense Monday as it waits for Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to announce whether he will continue in office or not. Sánchez shocked the country on Thursday, announcing he was taking five days off to think about his future after a court opened preliminary proceedings against his wife on corruption allegations. The legal complaint against his wife, Begoña Gómez, was filed by a far-right legal platform that says Gómez used her position to influence business deals. The group, Manos Limpias, or "Clean Hands," acknowledged that the complaint was based on newspaper articles. Spanish prosecutors say it should be thrown out. Sánchez said the move was too personal an attack on his family and he needed time to decide on his priorities. He will announce his decision Monday at a time yet to be decided. Sánchez essentially has four options: resign, seek a parliamentary vote of confidence, call a new election or remain in office. Any one of them could upset key legislative plans as well as a crucial election in the Catalonia region in May and the European Parliament election in June. Sánchez, 52, has been Spain's prime minister since 2018. He was able to form a new minority leftist coalition government in November to start another four-year term thanks to the exceedingly fragile support of a handful of small regional parties. He is one of Europe's longest-serving Socialist leaders and while popular internationally, he is loved or despised in Spain.

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Life & Style

Zendaya tennis movie ‘Challengers’ scores at weekend box office

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

The sexy tennis drama “Challengers” won the box office this weekend with \$15 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Zendaya and castmates Mike Faist and Josh O’Connor have been on a globetrotting press tour to get the word out about Italian director Luca Guadagnino’s original film, which opened in 3,477 locations in the U.S. and Canada.

“We’re obviously very, very happy with the number,” said Kevin Wilson, who heads theatrical distribution for Amazon Studios and MGM. “Looking at the audience who showed up, it’s really encouraging. It’s not the easiest audience to get to theaters.”

Women made up 58% of ticket buyers, who also skewed

younger overall: 41% were between the ages of 18 and 24.

Ticket sales from large format screens, including IMAX, made up about 40% of the opening weekend grosses. According to PostTrak exit poll reported by Deadline, 55% of audiences said they went to see the film because of Zendaya. In fact, this weekend, Zendaya movies accounted for around 26% of the overall box office with the re-release of “Dune: Part Two” in IMAX, which made nearly \$2 million.

The 27-year-old actor has been part of some of the most successful franchises of the last few years, including the “Spider-Man” and “Dune” movies. In both cases those were supporting roles in massive brand-name properties, but her eye-catching red carpet looks also often make head-

lines. “Challengers” would be the first real test of her ability to “open” a film on her own star and MGM and Amazon were not going to risk doing it without her.

The studio had originally planned to release “Challengers” in the fall of 2023, with a picturesque launch at the Venice Film Festival. But when the actors went on strike last July, the studio made the decision to scuttle the festival premiere and move the film to this weekend when they could safely assume the strike would be resolved. Zendaya sported many tennis-themed looks, styled by Law Roach, for her appearances.

“It would be hard to argue that we should have released this movie when she wasn’t able to support,” Wilson said.

He gave special credit to the



AP
Zendaya, a cast member in “Challengers,” poses at the premiere of the film at the Regency Village Theatre, Tuesday, April 16, 2024, in Los Angeles.

studio’s publicity and marketing teams for orchestrating a world tour that resulted in several viral fashion moments.

Reviews have been largely positive for the R-rated movie, which teases a steamy and

competitive love triangle between the tennis players. It currently has an 88% on Rotten Tomatoes and got a B+ CinemaScore from opening day audiences.

Guadagnino’s last film “

Bones and All,” starring Zendaya’s “Dune” co-star Timothée Chalamet, made \$15.2 million in its entire run. By midweek, “Challengers” expected to surpass “Call Me By Your Name” (\$18 million) to become Guadagnino’s highest grossing film.

For Amazon MGM Studios, the value also extends beyond the box office driving a “downstream value” for Amazon, including when “Challengers” eventually makes its way to Prime Video.

“I’ve always believed that theatrical is the best way to launch some of these films,” Wilson said. “When this thing gets to Prime Video, it’s obviously going to perform at a level that would be much greater than had it just gone directly to the platform. Theatrical is only a piece of it.”

Once dominant at CBS News before a bitter departure, Dan Rather makes his first return in 18 years

NEW YORK (AP)—Dan Rather returned to the CBS News airwaves for the first time since his bitter exit 18 years ago, appearing in a reflective interview on “CBS Sunday Morning” days before the debut of a Netflix documentary on the 92-year-old newsman’s life.

After 44 years at the network, 24 as anchor of the “CBS Evening News,” Rather left under a cloud following a botched investigation into then-President George W. Bush’s military record. Rather signed off as anchor for the last time on March 9, 2005, and exited the network when his con-

tract ended 15 months later.

With continued enmity between him and since-deposed CBS chief Leslie Moonves, Rather essentially became a nonperson at the news division he dominated for decades.

“Without apology or explanation, I miss CBS,” Rather told correspondent Lee Cowan in the interview that aired Sunday. “I’ve missed it since the day I left.”

Rather escaped official blame for the report that questioned Bush’s Vietnam War-era National Guard service but, as the anchor who introduced it, was identified with it. CBS could not vouch for the authenticity of some doc-



AP
This photo provided by CBS News shows Dan Rather with CBS correspondent Lee Cowan during an interview on “CBS Sunday Morning.”

uments upon which the report was based, although many people involved in the story still believe it was true.

In the documentary “Rath-

er,” debuting Wednesday on Netflix, Rather said he thought he would survive the incident, but his wife, Jean, told him, “You got into a fight with the president of the United States during his reelection campaign. What did you think was going to happen?”

Rather did not retire after leaving CBS, doing investigative journalism and rock star interviews for HDNet, a digital cable and satellite television network. Over the past few years, he has become known to a new generation as a tart-talking presence on social media.

This past week, he posted on X during former President Trump’s hush money trial: “Is it just me or did today seem sleazy even for Donald Trump?”

“You either get engaged and you get engaged in the new

terms ... or you’re out of the game,” Rather said in the CBS interview, filmed at his home in Texas. “And I wanted to stay in the game.”

The Netflix documentary traces his career from coverage of President John F. Kennedy’s assassination, the Vietnam War and Watergate, through his anchor years and beyond. It includes some of the then tightly-wound Rather’s odder incidents, including an assault in New York City by someone saying, “What’s the frequency, Kenneth,” then later appearing onstage with R.E.M. when the group performed its song of the same name.

Husband lashes out amid criticism of bad behavior

DEAR ABBY: My husband rarely says “thank you” and almost never apologizes for anything. The other day, I was at an office party to which family members were not invited. I brought home a plate of food for my husband, for which he refused to thank me when I hinted that a “thanks” might be nice, especially since it was dinnertime.

The office “lunch” had been hours ago, and I had brought nothing for myself. He said because I hadn’t come home when I said I would, he didn’t feel the need to thank me. When I told him it’s common courtesy to thank people, he continued arguing and eventually threw the plate of food across the room. Now he won’t apologize for that either. He feels he was justified in throwing the food.

Abby, my husband is a college professor and well-educated, yet he often overlooks common courtesy. He usually walks fast and ahead of me when we’re going places. He never says, “You look nice,” and he leaves the house without mentioning where he is going. It doesn’t concern him that it upsets me, as he is convinced that he is right about everything. The food-throwing is an extreme example of his behavior, but it has me concerned about his mental health at this point. Advice, please.

NEVER THANKED IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR NEVER THANKED: Your husband’s mental health is fine. What you have described in detail is not new behavior. The professor has been an educated boor for years and is clearly unwilling to change. I would question YOUR judgment for having tolerated his disrespectful behavior for the length of time you have because he has shown you repeatedly that your feelings are of little consequence to him.

DEAR ABBY: My sister lost her husband a year ago. She has three grown children, but she has a fractured relationship with her 30-year-old daughter. I am heartbroken because I have two daughters and I can’t imagine what my sister is going through. My niece was close to her father and has thrown in my sister’s face that he was her person and she told him everything. My niece and I have a good relationship, and she confides to me things she does not speak to her mother about.

I am debating whether to speak to my niece to get a sense of what her issue with my sister really is. My niece blames her mother for everything. I’m not sure if trying to help will backfire. Please help.

INVOLVED AUNT IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR AUNT: I am sure you mean well, but I don’t think

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

it would be helpful to insert yourself as a mediator between your sister and your niece. For whatever reason, your niece felt more comfortable confiding in her late father than in your sister. Stating that fact out loud was not “throwing it in someone’s face.”

Your relationship with your daughters is clearly different from the one your sister has with hers. Unless you want to alienate your niece, let the two of them work it out.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Brunson leads Knicks over 76ers for 3-1 series lead



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Jalen Brunson had just finished the highest-scoring game of his playoff career, the highest ever by a New York Knicks player in the postseason, and he was impressed.

Not by his own performance. Brunson loathes talking about that.

He meant by the Knicks fanbase, which came into Philadelphia, took over the arena and made Joel Embiid as miserable as the guys wearing blue.

Brunson scored a career playoff-high 47 points, added 10 assists and the Knicks beat the 76ers 97-92 on Sunday to take a 3-1 lead in their first-round playoff series.

Brunson had a 41-point game for Dallas against Utah in 2022 and another for the Knicks last year against Miami, but that one came in the Game 6 where the Knicks' season ended.

He wouldn't let them lose Sunday and a crowd that seemed split between big Northeast cities had a decidedly Knicks sound down the stretch.

"The Philadelphia fanbase is, I said this before, they're very relentless and very passionate. I mean, I'm an Eagles fan, I would know," said Brunson, who won two national championships playing collegiately for Villanova. "But seeing the Knicks here and hearing the Knicks here, it was pretty cool and it's awesome."

Not for Embiid, who had to hear Brunson get louder chants of "MVP! MVP!" than the guy who actually won the award last season.

"I love our fans but it was unfortunate. I'm not calling them out, but it is disappointing," Embiid said, adding that he's aware that Knicks fans often make the short train trip for the road games.

"But never seen it (like Sunday) and I've been here for 10 years. Yeah,



New York Knicks' Jalen Brunson (11) reacts after a basket during the second half of Game 4 in an NBA basketball first-round playoff series against the Philadelphia 76ers, Sunday, April 28, 2024, in Philadelphia

kind of (ticks) me off, especially because Philly is considered a sports town, so ... I don't think that should happen. It's not OK."

But Brunson's performance was too marvelous not to cheer as he surpassed the 46 points scored by Bernard King in 1984.

OG Anunoby added 16 points and 14 rebounds, and took on some of the defensive assignment against Embiid in the fourth quarter as the Knicks moved within a victory of getting to the Eastern Conference semifinals for the second straight year.

The No. 2-seeded Knicks can do that with a victory at home on Tuesday night.

PACERS 126, BUCKS 113

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Myles Turner scored 29 points, Tyrese Haliburton added 24 and Indiana made a franchise playoff record 22 3-pointers as they pulled away late for a vic-

tory over Milwaukee.

The win gave the Pacers a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series. Indiana has won three straight since losing the opener and can reach the Eastern Conference semifinals for the first time since 2014—with a win Tuesday at Milwaukee.

Indiana is 7-2 this season against the Bucks, who are trying to avoid a second straight first-round exit.

Haliburton posted a career playoff scoring high for the second straight game while Turner matched a playoff career high that he set in Friday night's overtime win. Turner also had nine rebounds and four assists against a Bucks squad that was missing two injured All-Stars, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard.

It's unclear if either will be available in Game 5. Antetokounmpo hasn't played since straining his left calf April 9. Lillard injured his Achilles tendon Friday night and had a

protective walking boot covering his right foot this weekend.

Brook Lopez led the Bucks with 27 points and nine rebounds, and Khris Middleton added 25 points, 10 rebounds and five assists.

TIMBERWOLVES 122, SUNS 116

PHOENIX (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 40 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 28 and Minnesota pulled away late to beat Phoenix and sweep the first-round playoff series.

Edwards scored 31 of his points in the second half and finished 13 of 23 from the field, including 7 of 13 from 3-point range. Continuing his ascent into superstardom, the 22-year-old threw down a powerful, one-handed jam to give Minnesota a 115-111 lead with 2:14 left.

Phoenix would never recover. The Wolves finished off the Suns despite Devin Booker's 49

points on 13 of 21 shooting. He also made 20 of 21 free throws. Kevin Durant added 33, but the rest of the team struggled.

Minnesota won despite coach Chris Finch leaving the game late in the fourth after an inadvertent collision with Wolves guard Mike Conley.

It was a tight fourth quarter and the Suns tied it at 107 on Royce O'Neale's 3-pointer with 4:30 remaining. Edwards and Jaden McDaniels hit back-to-back corner 3s to put the Wolves up 113-109 with 3:20 left.

The Wolves now wait to see if they will face the Denver Nuggets or Los Angeles Lakers in the second round.

CLIPPERS 116, MAVERICKS 111

DALLAS (AP)—Paul George and James Harden each scored 33 points while playing key fourth-quarter roles to help Los Angeles hold on after blowing a 31-point lead and beat Dallas, evening the first-round series at 2-2.

The Clippers won again without Kawhi Leonard, who missed the series opener with right knee inflammation before playing in the two Dallas victories.

The teams have split a pair on each other's home court in the third Western Conference first-round meeting between them in the past five seasons. Game 5 is Wednesday night in Los Angeles.

Kyrie Irving scored 40 points for Dallas, including an acrobatic layup with 2:15 remaining for a 104-103 lead that was the first for the Mavericks since the middle of the first quarter.

Luka Dončić had 29 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in his fourth career playoff triple-double—all against the Clippers.

George scored 26 points in the first half, when the Clippers' lead reached 55-24 on a 3-pointer by Harden. The high-scoring stars combined to go 11 of 16 from long range as LA finished 18 of 29 overall.

Thunder's Daigneault is NBA Coach of the Year after leading young team to No. 1 seed in West

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander joked at first when asked what makes Oklahoma City Thunder coach Mark Daigneault good at his job.

"He's annoying. Always nagging," the All-Star guard said with a chuckle.

He continued with a more serious tone.

"The best thing about him is no matter who you are, he has a standard," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "And it doesn't matter if you've been here five years, if you're the best player on the team, if you're the worst player on the team, if you just got here last week—there's a standard, and you've got to play to it and live up to it on and off the court. I think that's what's allowed our culture to be what it is as a group. And it starts with him."

Those qualities have been rewarded. Daigneault, 39,

was named NBA Coach of the Year on Sunday after leading one of the league's youngest teams to the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference playoffs. He joins Scott Brooks (2010) as the only Thunder coaches to win the award.

The other finalists were Minnesota's Chris Finch and Orlando's Jamahl Mosley. Finch led the Timberwolves to a 56-26 record and the No. 3 seed in the Western Conference playoffs after they had to go through the play-in tournament to make the playoffs the previous year. Mosley led the Magic to a 47-35 record this season after the team went 34-48 last season.

Milwaukee coach Doc Rivers, who was Coach of the Year with Orlando in 2001, said Daigneault was clearly ahead of the pack this season.

"Working with a bunch of young guys and getting all these young guys to buy in

on a championship level — I don't think people understand how hard that is to do," Rivers said before the Thunder beat the Bucks late in the regular season. "And the proof is you don't see a lot of young teams in their position. ... It's easy for me on that one."

Daigneault spent five years as head coach of the Thunder's G-League affiliate. He had a .572 winning percentage with four playoff appearances and three division titles. He took over as Thunder coach in 2020 after Billy Donovan left to become the Chicago Bulls coach.

Oklahoma City went 22-50 in Daigneault's first year as Thunder head coach, and then 24-58 in his second before signs of a turnaround surfaced. Last season, Oklahoma City went 40-42 and reached the play-in tournament, and Daigneault finished second in the Coach of the Year voting.

The Thunder went 57-25 this season and clinched a tie for the best record in the West on the dramatic final day of the regular season.

Daigneault has benefited from having exceptional young talent to develop. Gilgeous-Alexander, 25, finished third in the league with 30.1 points per game this season and is a finalist for Most Valuable Player. Jalen Williams, a first-round pick in 2022, averaged 19.1 points this season after being runner-up for Rookie of the Year last season. Josh Giddey, the sixth overall pick in 2021, averaged 12.3 points, 6.4 rebounds and 4.8 assists this season.

But the key addition has been Chet Holmgren. The No. 2 pick in the 2022 draft missed all of last season with a foot injury. This season, the 7-foot-1 center averaged 16.5 points, 7.9 rebounds

and 2.3 blocks while creating mismatches on both ends with his versatility. He is a finalist for Rookie of the Year.

Sacramento's Mike Brown, the unanimous Coach of the Year last season and the winner with Cleveland in 2009, was impressed with how Daigneault created a strong team so quickly with the talent general manager Sam Presti stockpiled.

"To have the type of patience to go through the process, not panic and all be on the same page knowing that it's a process — it's just a beautiful sight to see from the outside looking in," Brown said. "Not many NBA organizations, starting from ownership on down, are like this."

But it goes beyond having talent to work with. Williams is one of several players who has raved about Daigneault's communication skills.

"I think any time you can relate to the people you're teaching, you're able to get a lot further. ... It makes us willing to listen," Williams said. "He also loves the game, and we can sense that just on how he's—kind of his approach and how much film and statistics and analytics that he goes through on a daily basis to give us prep for each game. I think when you can see that as a player, I think that makes us want to play hard for him."

Daigneault said he listens because he knows he can't do it all alone.

"Ultimately, we're in it together," he said. "We're all working together to try to get to the best thing and we don't care where that idea comes from. If it comes from a player, comes from a video assistant, it doesn't matter. We're just trying to get to the best thing and move in the same direction."

Braves win in extra innings, 4-3, to take series over Guardians



ATLANTA (AP)—
Austin Riley

knocked in Ronald Acuña Jr. with a 10th inning single Sunday and the Atlanta Braves rallied late to beat the Guardians 4-3 and win a three-game series between the top two teams in the majors.

A.J. Minter (4-1) picked up the win by throwing a scoreless 10th inning.

Emmanuel Clase (1-0) took the loss.

The win was the 11th in the last 13 games by the Braves, who handed the Guardians their first loss in a road series in five tries.

The Guardians ran themselves out of the 10th inning. Stephen Kwan was picked off trying to steal third with one out, and José Ramírez ended the ending when he overran second trying to steal a base.

Riley was 2-for-4 with a walk and Ozzie Albies was 2-for-4 with an RBI.

The Braves tied the game 3-3 in the eighth on an RBI double by Albies and an RBI single by Matt Olson.

BLUE JAYS 3, DODGERS 1

TORONTO (AP)—Kevin Gausman pitched seven solid innings for his first victory of the season, and Toronto stopped Los Angeles' six-game win streak with a 3-1 victory.

Alejandro Kirk went 3 for 3 for Toronto, hitting his first homer of the season in the second. He was mired in an 0-for-11 slide coming into the day.

The Blue Jays had lost a season-high five straight games.

Dodgers slugger Shohei Ohtani hit a deep drive to center field in his first at-bat against Gausman, but Toronto's Daulton Varsho made a leaping catch on the warning track before slamming into the fence.

Blue Jays right fielder George Springer made a sensational diving catch on Andy Pages' liner for the first out of the ninth.

Freddie Freeman hit a solo homer for the Dodgers, his second, but Los Angeles couldn't complete back-to-back sweeps. The NL West leaders won three straight at Washington last week before crossing the border into Canada.

TIGERS 4, ROYALS 1

DETROIT (AP)—Wenceel Pérez hit a two-run drive for his first major league homer, and Detroit beat Kansas City.

Jake Rogers also homered for the Tigers, who have won five of seven. It was Detroit's 10th come-from-behind win of the season.

The Royals have lost two in a row after a four-game

winning streak.

Detroit left-hander Tarik Skubal (4-0) pitched seven innings of one-run ball. He struck out six while improving to 2-7 with a 4.65 ERA in 12 career games against the Royals.

WHITE SOX 4, RAYS 2

CHICAGO (AP)—Erick Fedde pitched seven-hit ball into the ninth inning, and Chicago beat Tampa Bay for a sweep of their three-game series.

Chicago improved to 6-22. It outscored Tampa Bay 21-13 this weekend.

Gavin Sheets and Eloy Jiménez each had three hits for the White Sox in the finale. Andrew Benintendi, who homered twice and had six RBIs during Saturday night's 8-7 victory, had two hits and drove in two runs.

Issac Paredes homered for the Rays, who have dropped six of seven.

METS 4, CARDINALS 2, 11 INNINGS

NEW YORK (AP)—Mark Vientos hit a two-run homer in the 11th inning on his second day in the majors this season to give New York a comeback victory over St. Louis that prevented a three-game sweep.

New York was 0 for 15 with runners in scoring position and down to its last strike when Harrison Bader singled home automatic runner DJ Stewart from third base with the tying run.

Vientos, who singled as a pinch hitter in the ninth, then drove a 1-2 pitch from Matthew Liberatore (0-1) just beyond the glove of a leaping Michael Siani at the right-center fence.

A fired-up Vientos pumped his arms with joy as he rounded the bases and was swarmed by excited teammates at home plate.

ATHLETICS 7, ORIOLES 6

BALTIMORE (AP)—Closer Craig Kimbrel blew his second save in as many opportunities and departed with a possible injury as Oakland rallied to a series-deciding victory over Baltimore.

Two nights after he threw only eight of 24 pitches for strikes, Kimbrel (3-1) threw six straight balls to open his outing, the fifth of which prompted the first visit from Orioles manager Brandon Hyde and team medical staff. He stayed in to complete the at-bat against Kyle McCann, who drove Kimbrel's 3-2 offering into the seats next to the out-of-town scoreboard in right center.

Kimbrel then exited after a second visit including medical



Atlanta Braves' Austin Riley (27) celebrates his walk-off RBI-single for the win in the 10th inning of a baseball game against the Cleveland Guardians, Sunday, April 28, 2024, in Atlanta.

staff and Dillon Tate completed the inning.

NATIONALS 12, MARLINS 9

MIAMI (AP)—Nick Senzel homered twice and drove in five runs as Washington erased an early seven-run deficit to beat reeling Miami.

Trey Lipscomb had three hits while Alex Call reached base five times on two singles, two walks and a hit by pitch for the Nationals.

The Marlins lost their sixth straight and fell to an NL worst 6-23. Jazz Chisholm Jr. hit his second grand slam homer of the season for Miami, which is 2-14 at home.

It was the second consecutive game the Nationals scored double digit runs in the series after their 11-4 win on Saturday.

YANKEES 15, BREWERS 5

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Aaron Judge homered in the first inning and played a central role as a baserunner during a seven-run rally in the sixth as New York defeated Milwaukee.

Anthony Rizzo went 4 for 4 and hit his 300th career homer. Anthony Volpe added a three-run shot on his 23rd birthday. Judge went 3 for 4 with three RBIs, including a 441-foot solo shot.

New York grabbed a one game lead in the AL East over the Baltimore Orioles, who lost 7-6 to Oakland. The Yankees begin a four-game series at Baltimore on Monday.

RANGERS 4, REDS 3

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Wyatt Langford and Adolis García homered during Texas' four-run first inning, helping Dane Dunning and Texas beat Cincinnati.

Dunning (3-2) struck out a season-high 10 in 5 1/3 innings. He allowed two runs, one earned, and three hits.

García golfed an 0-2 curve

from Andrew Abbott (1-3) deep to left for a two-run homer with two out in the first inning. After Jonah Heim singled, Langford went on a memorable dash around the bases for his first career homer.

The 22-year-old Langford drove a 3-2 fastball toward the gap in right-center. The ball caromed off a small portion of the wall that is angled toward the foul line in right, and it got away from right fielder Jake Fraley.

GIANTS 3, PIRATES 2

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Thairo Estrada and Mike Yastrzemski hit back-to-back home runs in the third inning, and rookie right-hander Keaton Winn had another strong start to lead San Francisco to a victory over Pittsburgh.

Rookie shortstop Tyler Fitzgerald added three hits for the Giants, who took two of three from the Pirates and finished their longest home-stand of the season 6-4. Pittsburgh lost for the 10th time in its past 13 games.

Winn (3-3) held the Pirates to one run over six innings, his line over the past three starts, all victories. Winn walked one, struck out five. He also hit Edward Olivares to start the fifth inning, leading to a run on Rowdy Tellez's RBI double.

DIAMONDBACKS 3, MARINERS 2

SEATTLE (AP)—Brandon Pfaadt had a career-high 11 strikeouts, Ketel Marte broke a tie with an RBI double in the eighth inning, Christian Walker homered and Arizona beat Seattle.

Marte doubled off reliever Trent Thornton (0-1), scoring Kevin Newman from second to help end Arizona's three-game losing streak.

Arizona relievers retired all nine batters they faced.

Joe Mantiplay (2-1) pitched the seventh for the victory, and Kevin Ginkel picked up his fifth save in seven opportunities.

Former Diamondback Josh Rojas led off the game with a homer for Seattle. It was his sixth career leadoff homer and his second in the three-game series.

ASTROS 8, ROCKIES 2

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Kyle Tucker, Jose Altuve and Jeremy Peña each hit a solo homer, helping Framer Valdez and Houston beat Colorado in Mexico City.

Tucker and Yainer Diaz each drove in two runs as Houston swept the two-game series at Alfredo Harp Helú Stadium.

Valdez (1-0) pitched five innings of two-run ball in his first big league start since April 2. The left-hander allowed five hits, struck out six and walked none.

Valdez had been sidelined by elbow inflammation, one of several pitching injuries that had contributed to Houston's 9-19 start. Justin Verlander is back, but the Astros are awaiting the return of Luis Garcia and Lance McCullers Jr. at some point this season.

PHILLIES 8, PADRES 6

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Bryson Stott hit two two-run homers, J.T. Realmuto also connected and Taijun Walker made a slick behind-the-back catch in his season debut to help Philadelphia beat San Diego for their first road sweep of the season.

The Phillies overwhelmed the Padres with nine homers and terrific starting pitching in becoming the first team to sweep San Diego this year. The Padres haven't seemed to recover from blowing a late five-run lead at Colorado on Thursday and losing 10-9. Although they briefly had

the lead Sunday, the Padres lost their season-high fourth straight game.

Walker (1-0) opened the season on the injured list with right shoulder soreness and was activated earlier Sunday from a rehab assignment. He pitched into the seventh after Aaron Nola and Ranger Suárez each went eight innings in the first two games.

Walker was chased by pinch-hitter Luis Campusano's three-run homer with one out in the seventh that pulled the Padres to 7-6. Walker also allowed Jake Cronenworth's two-run shot in the third. The right-hander allowed six runs and eight hits, struck out four and walked two.

TWINS 11, ANGELS 5

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Austin Martin and Alex Kirilloff drove in two runs apiece, and Minnesota stretched their winning streak to seven games while completing a weekend sweep of struggling Los Angeles.

Martin had a two-run single during a four-run fifth inning for the Twins, and Kirilloff had a pinch-hit two-run double in Minnesota's four-run seventh. Ryan Jeffers, Jose Miranda, Christian Vázquez and Willi Castro had three hits apiece as Minnesota pounded out 17 hits while scoring at least five runs in its seventh consecutive game and moving back above .500 for the season at 14-13.

Luis Rengifo and Nolan Schanuel homered and Jo Adell had an RBI double in the fifth for the Angels, who have lost four straight and nine of 10 after allowing 32 Minnesota runs in the three-game series.

Mike Trout had a late RBI single as Los Angeles committed three errors and fell to 3-9 at home this season, matching the second-worst start at the Big A in franchise history.

RED SOX 5, CUBS 4

BOSTON (AP)—Tyler O'Neill hit a game-ending bloop single, and Boston topped Chicago.

Jarren Duran hit a two-run triple and Connor Wong drove in two runs with a pair of two-out singles, helping Boston to the win in the rubber game of weekend set. The Red Sox beat the Cubs 17-0 on Saturday.

Chicago trailed 4-1 before Mike Tauchman hit a tying three-run homer against Chris Martin in the eighth inning. Matt Mervis hit an RBI single in the seventh for the Cubs' first run of the game.

For the second straight day, a large gathering of Cubs fans that made the trip to Fenway Park were unable to wave their "W" flags, a staple after wins at Wrigley Field.

Micro Games-bound Team Marianas grateful to community



Fundraising efforts for the Team Marianas that will be competing in the 2024 Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands are ongoing and NMI athletes and officials are grateful for the strong support they are receiving from the community.

For nearly a month now, community members shopping at Joeten stores have also been donating money for Team Marianas with the funds to be used for the NMI delegation's travel costs to the Marshall Islands, which will be hosting this year's Micro Games from June 15 to 24. Team Marianas members themselves witnessed the community's generosity, as they volunteered for Joeten stores' "Celebrity Bagging" event and assisted shoppers.

"Participating in the bagging event and in these fundraising initiatives is a rewarding experience for us. It provided us with a unique opportunity to engage directly with our community and garner their support. It allowed us to interact with customers at a personal level, share our passion for basketball, and express our sincere appreciation for their support. These initiatives highlight the significance of community involvement in supporting our national athletes," NMI National Basketball Team member Preston Basa said.

Basketball, athletics, weightlifting, swimming, va'a, and tennis athletes and officials



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

NMI athletes and officials, and NMSA board officers and members participate in Joeten's "Celebrity Bagging" event at Joeten Susupe and Garapan stores this month.

along with members of the Northern Marianas Sports Association Board have participated in the "Celebrity Bagging" program. Representatives of softball and wrestling will have their turn this weekend.

Joeten Daidai Foundation executive director Patty Palacios said the experience was remarkable for all that had interaction during the event.

"Team Marianas' participation in the Celebrity Bagging event at Joeten stores was not only about helping customers bag groceries, but also about personalizing the shopping experience. The event gave shoppers the opportunity to meet the athletes that will be benefiting from all the funds raised for Team Marianas. It is a personal and significant

gesture for athletes to ask for a donation on behalf of themselves and their teammates. The sense of camaraderie and 'one team' resonated beyond the counters and showed a community coming together for a greater purpose," Palacios said.

Pride and unity

That experience, according to Basa, is not only instrumental in raising funds for Team Marianas' participation in the Micro Games, but also in fostering a sense of unity and pride among the member federations, the NMSA, and the community.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to give back and strengthen our bonds with the wonderful people of our com-

munity," Basa said.

Mikky Kautz, another member of the NMI National Basketball Team, noted that the fundraising initiative gave her squad the platform to introduce themselves to those who are not familiar with the program. Kautz also recognized the challenge in raising funds at these trying times, but she and the team are deeply grateful to everyone that still stepped up and provided help.

Swimmers Justin Ma and Sari Barman also believed that the fundraising efforts helped them connect with the community. They added that they had a great learning experience assisting shoppers and greeting and thanking them for their support to Team Marianas.

Antonette Labausa, who will be representing the NMI in weightlifting competition for the third straight year, said the fundraiser and the bagging program at Joeten brought awareness to the community about the upcoming Micronesian Games and showcased NMI athletes in a positive light to the public.

"On behalf of the athletes of the weightlifting team, we would like to express our gratitude to the community for their donations and to Joeten for this opportunity to raise funds for the Micro Games,"

Labausa said.

Meanwhile, Team Marianas chef de mission Valerie Hofschneider acknowledged the commitment of the athletes and officials and their respective national federations not only to their training and preparations for the Micro Game but also to these fundraising efforts.

"We're all in this together, sharing responsibility to be able to participate in the 2024 Micronesian Games, represent the NMI well, and bring honor to our beloved islands," Hofschneider said. (PR)

ANNE

From page 16

ship, she said she's happy because she gets to hold the trophy and have her name on there. She was also the girls champion of the 2023 Crowne Plaza CNMI Junior Championship.

In the North Pacific Regional Championship, she won first place overall in the U14 division and first place in the U14 doubles with partner Lina Tsukagoshi. With that win, Anne secured her spot in the 2024 Pacific Oceania Junior Championship in Lautoka, Fiji this July.

Fifteen-year-old Si Woo said that the tournament was "pretty good. I think I was very consistent on my shots. I also practiced a lot even when there's no tournament."

In the finals against Kwon, the Mount Carmel School student said that he almost lost, but he made some strong shots that Kwon missed which led to his eventual win. The eighth grader added that the weather was "very hot and very windy and because of the wind, it changed the ball direction a lot."

With winning the championship, he said he feels very proud of himself. "Thank you to my friends and family for supporting me," he said.

Si Woo was one of four NMI netters who placed in the Top 4 of the boys U16 division in the NPRC earlier this month, which qualified him for the 2024 Pacific Oceania Junior Championship in Lautoka, Fiji this July.

In the awards ceremony after the event, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager Clayton Darlington said, "It's been an honor to be a part of this special tournament. Tennis and sports in our community are extremely important and I honestly believe keeping kids involved in sports is the best for our community. So what you've done over the past two weekends is absolutely incredible."

Results of the boys/girls 14, 12; U10 co-ed; and boys 12 and 18, and girls 14 and 18 doubles divisions will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

The 2024 Crowne Plaza CNMI Junior Championship is organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

LADY

From page 16

runs in the second and was backed by her offense as Direnalyn Castro, Vileene Norita, Ti'ana Mae Villanueva, Tamia Hix, and Sablan herself scored five runs for a 5-2 lead.

Lady Rays pitcher Draeshia Manglona, on the other hand, had a tough time finding the strike zone and walked multiple Lady Dolphins which caused them to capitalize and break the game wide open even more.

Only two runs scored for SSHS in the third by Rosie Saralu and Teneasha Diaz, as MHS scored two in the third and two more in the fourth. By the sixth inning, MHS had an 11-4 lead from runs contributed by the top to the bottom of their order.

In a last hoorah, SSHS tried to chip away at the lead and walk their way home, but Sablan put them

away as she enticed outs from ground balls and allowed only two runs and ended the game, 11-6.

With Sablan, Castro, Norita, Villanueva, and Hix, on MHS' roster were Hashly Acosta, Herminia Agulto, Reyna Agulto, Sheira Dela Rosa, Angelina George, Deivalyn Ham, Loraena Lucas, Pattylyn Mendiola, Jessica Merifel, Destiny Pangelinan, and Benicia Sablan.

SSHS' roster along with Manglona, Saralu, and Diaz included Merceana Ada, Ai-yishi Agulto, Giselle Bocago, Aleeza Castro, Kyrie Cepeda, Casey Cruz, Riana Jicko, Zoey Pangelinan, Jahsmin Ramon, Shyleen Santos, Mathilda Selepeo, Isabella Teigita, Yasmeen Younis, and Darlincia Masga.

MHS head coach Jared Ayuyu said after the awards ceremony that throughout the season, they fought out every game. "We never had anything easy. The girls were really good at listening and making sure they made the

right plays at the right time. I'm just super happy that they all contributed to this win."

As they were behind at the end of the first inning, Ayuyu said that they just left it all up to the girls to get back into the game. "We wanted them to hit. We wanted them to run. We just wanted to make it a fun and exciting game and we really didn't want them to walk that much, but it is what it is, and that's how we earned some points," he said.

He added that all their games were great, but the championship game was "really exciting, nerve-racking and so much more, but I'm so happy that the girls pulled through."

The team only has two or three seniors, so they'll have a bulk of their championship team when the fast pitch season starts up next school year.

Ayuyu then thanked all his fellow coaches for their help. "We all helped each

other to make sure that the girls had fun, had a ride, had food and drinks—but also a big thank you to the girls for playing their hearts out and believing in us coaches to help them succeed."

Daviann Sablan, who carried them to the championship from the mound, said it was actually her first time playing softball. Even with that, she said that she learned quickly and that it was fun. As for the championship game against SSHS, she said, "I was actually really scared to challenge them. But they did a really good job and I'm proud of the sportsmanship that they had."

In the regular season, the Lady Dolphins scorched through four opponents and won all their games, and in the championship tourney, they retained the top spot as they defeated Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School and Kagman High School to gain a spot in the finals.

NICK

From page 16

club, Sablan teed off from lucky hole No. 13 and 180 yards later, landed the ball that bagged him the prize of \$10,000 cash and a 2024 Nissan Versa SR from Joeten Motors Co.

Sablan said of his hole-in-one win, "Pure luck is what I thought of when getting the hole-in-one. Again, being partnered with my father, made it even more amazing."

On how he felt, he said, "the feeling was the best feeling any human being could ever have."

Sablan added, "We played from the tips on this tourney, when I usually use a 6-iron on this hole. I pulled out a 4-iron instead so I could take an easy swing with the club's

maximum output. From there, the whole shot aligned and the best thing happened."

As for the prizes he won, he said, "The prizes are awesome! A car and a nice sum of money never made anyone mad."

He then thanked all the sponsors and players of the tournament, especially Patrick Guerrero, Marco Peter, his dad, Nick Sablan Sr., and putters coming for his team.

For the optional play, Dennis Cruz was the closest at 4 feet and 2 inches on hole No. 3; Paul Reyes was 7 feet and 2 inches on hole No. 13; Amier Younis was 8 feet on No. 7; and the most accurate drive was Anthony Tomokane at 9 inches on hole No. 12.

Proceeds of the event goes toward the annual Chamber educational and trade scholarship program.



Brunson leads Knicks over 76ers for 3-1 lead

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Micro Games-bound Team Marianas grateful to community

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Lady Dolphins wraps perfect season with softball title

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins swept the season and wrapped it up with a title after they defeated Saipan Southern High School Lady Man-

ta Rays, 11-6, in the finals of the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Dandan Softball Field.



MHS pitcher Daviann Sablan held down SSHS' offense after two runs scored for the Lady Rays in the first inning. She then didn't allow

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LEIGH GASES

Marianas High School varsity softball team pitcher Daviann Sablan throws in the finals against Saipan Southern High School in the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Dandan Softball Field.

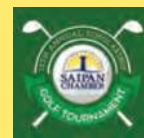


LEIGH GASES

Marianas High School Lady Dolphins varsity softball team poses for a group photo after their championship game against Saipan Southern High School Lady Manta Rays in the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Dandan Softball Field.

Nick Sablan Jr. hits hole-in-1 in Chamber golf tourney

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Nick Sablan Jr. had luck on his side in the two-person scramble

ble as he hit a hole-in-one during the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 15th Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort last Saturday. With one swing of the

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nick Sablan Jr. watches the trail of the ball he hit that became a hole-in-one shot which won him \$10,000 and a brand new 2024 Nissan Versa SR from Joeten Motors during the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 15th Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort last Saturday. To his right is his father Nick Sr.

Anne, Si Woo champs of Crowne Plaza Jr. Champs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



No. 2 Anne Lee and unseeded Si Woo Lee won their respective divisions and etched their names as champions in the perpetual trophy of the 2024 Crowne Plaza CNMI Junior Championship after their finals last weekend at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Anne defended her title and won the championship two years in a row, as in the girls 18 division finals, she overpowered No. 1 seed Serin Chung, 6-2, 6-0, last Sunday.



LEIGH GASES

Champions Anne Lee, left, and Si Woo Lee pose with their medals and perpetual trophies during the awards ceremony of the 2024 Crowne Plaza CNMI Junior Championship after their finals last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Anne punched her ticket to the finals after she bested Hoo Wang, 6-1, 6-4, last Saturday.

For Si Woo in the boys 18 division, busted his racket out in a deuce-filled matchup against No. 1 seed David Kwon in the finals. Si Woo finally got the better of Kwon and won, 7-6 (3), 7-5, last Sunday. He cemented his finals spot after he beat No. 2 June Yu, 6-2, 6-2, last Saturday.

Thirteen-year-old Anne said that the tournament was good. She challenged a much older opponent and said that 17-year-old Chung's rally was pretty good, but that she just focused on the ball and not on Chung.

With winning the champion-

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